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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 004378

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2015

TAGS: PREL EG IZ IS KBIO

SUBJECT: BIO INFORMATION ON NEW EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ

Classified by Acting DCM Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released in late April a list of names of Egyptian diplomats assigned to new postings, including that of Deputy Assistant Minister for Eastern Arab Affairs, Dr. Ihab Sherif. At the time, the MFA did not reveal that Sherif was slotted to go to Baghdad, since the Iraqi Transitional Government had not yet been officially formed. Sherif was reported to have arrived in Baghdad in late May or early June and we understood he will shortly present his credentials to the Iraqi Government as Egypt's Ambassador to Baghdad. (Note: Sherif's predecessor, Ambassador Mubarak, had been given Ambassadorial title by Cairo but had never presented his credentials to the Iraqi government. This protocol step would have indicated a return to normalized relations. At the time, the Iraqi Embassy in Cairo suggested to Post that the GOE would delay a return to normal diplomatic relations until the December national elections. End note.)

¶2. (C) Ambassador Sherif is well known to Post, as we have worked closely with him on Middle East peace process and other regional issues over the past several years. Before assuming the Deputy Assistant Minister position at the MFA, Sherif served as the Charge d'Affaires at the Egyptian Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel, following the recall of Egyptian Ambassador Bassiouni in 2000 during the second Intifada. As a result of his work in Israel and Syria, Sherif is among the most well-informed observers of the Middle East peace process in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and has been a close confidant to the Minister on this subject.

¶3. (C) Comment: Sherif considers himself a friend of the United States, and as such has endured criticism from diplomatic colleagues. Regardless, he is tough on U.S. policy in the region, particularly vis-a-vis Israel, but is rarely polemical or confrontational. He has published a number of photographic books on various countries, hoping one day to complete a book on the United States for an Arabic-reading audience. Sherif is interested in reaching out to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and would welcome contacts at any and all levels - an unusual characteristic for a member of the protocol-conscious Egyptian diplomatic cadre. Despite his French education and Francophile tendencies, Sherif retains a healthy and constructive attitude toward the United States. We are confident that a relationship with Sherif in Baghdad would be both productive and useful. End comment.

¶4. (U) Begin text of curriculum vitae (C.V.) for Dr. Ihab Sherif:

Date of Birth: January 1, 1954

Education:

1994 Ph.D. in Political Science, "The Phenomenon of Militant Islam in the Arab World," Sorbonne University, Paris

1988 Diploma in Conflict Resolution, Uppsala University, Sweden

1984 Doctorate (Masters Degree) of Troisieme Cycle in Political Sciences, Paris XI University

1984 M.A. in Political Science, "The Impact of the Iranian Revolution on the Secular and Semi-secular Regimes in the Middle East," Paris University

1981 Diploma of Higher Specialised Studies in Diplomacy, Paris XI University

1981 Diploma from the French International Institute for Public Administration, Paris

1975 University Degree in Psychology, Cairo University

Career:

May 2005 Head of Egyptian Mission to Iraq

2003-2005 Deputy Assistant Minister for Mashraq Affairs

Nov 2000-2003 Charge d'Affaires, Tel Aviv

Jul 1999-2000 Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv

1998-1999 Chief of Cabinet for the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for American Affairs

1994-1998 Counselor, Damascus

1992-1994 Staff member and lecturer, Egyptian Institute for Diplomatic Studies

1988-1992 First Secretary, Paris

1985-1988 Cabinet of Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, State Minister for Foreign Affairs

1981-1985 Third Secretary, Central African Republic

1979 Diplomat

Honors:

1999 The Cross Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany

Commentary:

Dr. Ihab Al-Sherif frequently writes on political and economic themes for Arab newspapers such as Al Ahram, The Review of International Politics, and is a lecturer at different Universities (Sorbonne, Centre D'Etudes de l'Islam Contemporain (Paris), Nasser Academy, and the Cairo Institute for Diplomatic Studies).

Dr. Ihab's chief hobby is photography. He has published five books of photographs and impressions on various countries around the world. He was awarded the Merit of Order from Germany for his publishing efforts.

Dr. Ihab speaks perfect French and English. He is married.

End text of C.V.

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